

CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

25X1A2g

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Venezuela

DATE DISTR. 14 March 1949

SUBJECT Labor Situation in Lake Maracaibo Area

NO. OF PAGES 2 25X1A2g

PLACE 25X1A6a

ACQUIRED [REDACTED]

Return to CIA Library

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

25X1A2g

DATE OF IN [REDACTED]

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

25X1X6

1. As a result of the Accion Democratica-inspired walkout of 17 January 1949, one of the major oil companies affected in the east shore area made a survey of labor conduct during that period on an individual worker basis. Statistics proved conclusively that the strike was rendered ineffective and ultimately broken as a result of nonsupport on the part of the Communists and firmness on the part of the military.
2. In such Communist strongholds as Bachaquero and Mene Grande, there was little or no work stoppage, while in Accion Democratica sectors, particularly Cabimas and Tia Juana, it was the Communists who refused to walk out, or were the first to return to work. It was reliably reported that in the oil fields of eastern Venezuela, when news of the Lake Maracaibo strike broke, the military promptly arrested all AD leaders and agitators and went so far as to demitize and arm certain known Communists to maintain order and avoid work stoppages in that area.
3. Communist leadership in Maracaibo since the 24 November 1948 revolution has been shrewd. Communists have refrained from overt agitation and acts which would prejudice them with the companies and government, and as a result have not been outlawed nor restricted in their activities other than being subjected to certain limitations which were generally applicable as a result of the temporary suspension of constitutional guarantees. As of the moment, there is no other political body sponsoring labor in that area. As a consequence, in any fair election, which has been guaranteed by the incumbent military government, the Communists would stand to gain as a result of labor and Accion Democratica support.
4. While the Accion Democratica Party has been officially outlawed, the labor syndicates that formerly belonged to it in the Maracaibo area are still organized but with no apparent political affiliation as of the moment. These groups, however, are seemingly loyal to their former political connections and there is evidence of unrest among them in the Lake Maracaibo area. Despite the return to work, muffled rumblings of discontent and talk of future strikes and trouble continue. The great bulk of the oil workers in the State of Zulia were members of the Accion Democratica Party.
5. The second contributing factor to the settlement of the abortive Accion Democratica walkout of 17 January was the resolute and determined action of the military.

CLASSIFICATION ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

STATE	NAVY	NSRB	DISTRIBUTION	Document No.
ARMY	AIR			NO CHANGE in Class

This document is hereby regraded to
CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the
letter of 13 October 1949 from the
Director of Central Intelligence to the
Archivist of the United States.

Auth: [REDACTED]

-2-

6. Captain Gamez Calcano, in charge of the East Lake military establishment, shares the views of his superior,* Lieut. Colonel Roberto Casanova, that it is incumbent upon the military, in the interest of the country and the prestige of the Army, to shoot down laborers in the event of another illegal oil strike. This could be somewhat alarming in view of the psychology of a large sector of the laboring class in the Maracaibo oil fields. When a strike is called legally, or even illegally, as was the case in the 17 January walkout, a great many of the workers, no matter how unsympathetic or even opposed they may be, will remain away from their jobs until the trouble is over either as a result of fear or intimidation. This can give a strike the appearance of being much better organized and supported than it really is.

25X1A2g

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~~~CONFIDENTIAL~~